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2005 Governor's Awards In The Arts Recipients Announced

Seven To Be Recognized For Excellence In The Arts

The Tennessee Arts Commission has announced the recipients of the **2005 Governor's Awards in the Arts**. The awards were established in 1971 to recognize individuals and organizations that have made outstanding and significant contributions to the cultural life of Tennessee, and are the state's highest honor in the Arts.

"165 awards have been awarded over the years, and that's certainly a testament to the quality of artistic talent and creative expression that is found in our state," said Rich Boyd, executive director of the Commission.

According to Boyd, the Commission received a record number of 68 quality nominations from all areas of the state for the 2005 awards. A special Commission panel reviewed the nominations. Recipients were selected to receive awards in The *Folklife Heritage*, *Distinguished Artist*, and *Arts Leadership* categories.

The *Folklife Heritage Award* recognizes folk artists or organizations who have made outstanding contributions to artistic tradition. The award is intended to honor long-term achievements within art forms that are rooted in the traditional culture of Tennessee.

Receiving *Folklife Heritage Awards* are **Charlie Acuff** of Alcoa, an old-time fiddle player and humorous storyteller who comes from a long and distinguished musical family tradition; and **Fletcher Bright** of Lookout Mountain, an accomplished teacher, arranger, and musician who has touched the lives of many Tennesseans through his musical genius and his generosity.

Arts Leadership Awards will be presented to **Richard R. Ranta** of Memphis, dean of the College of Communication and Fine Arts at the University of Memphis who has played a significant role in creating the conditions and climate for the arts to grow and flourish in the Memphis community and throughout the state; and **Judy Woodruff** of Johnson City, executive director of the Tennessee Association of Dance, who has made a tremendous difference in the dance community of Tennessee through her support and her many seminars and workshops across the country.

This award recognizes organizations, businesses, educators, patrons, arts administrators, corporations and volunteers who have demonstrated significant support or participation in activities which foster excellence in, appreciation of, or access to the arts throughout the state.

The *Distinguished Artist Award* recognizes artists of exceptional talent and creativity in any discipline, who over the course of a career, have contributed to the arts and have helped guide and influence directions, trends, and aesthetic practices on a state or national level.

The *Distinguished Artist Award* will be awarded to three outstanding recipients. Receiving the awards are: **Hubert Shuptrine** of Chattanooga, a nationally acclaimed visual artist who is known for his works in watercolor, and his skill and ability to make every picture an event to be reckoned with; **Isaac Hayes** of Cordova, an internationally-known Tennessean, whose musical achievements span over four decades and has played a leading role in creating what has become known as the "Memphis Sound." His soundtrack for the movie *Shaft* received a Golden Globe, Oscar, and Grammy Award; and **Booker T. & The MG's**, a group of musicians from Memphis that helped change the world forever as the architects of soul music. No other instrumental group has been as prolific and has influenced so many as these musicians who began their career while in high school in Memphis recording at Stax records.

The recipients will be honored at a reception on March 15 in Nashville. The awards are scheduled to be presented by Governor Phil Bredesen later that evening in a special ceremony. For the third time, BellSouth is the corporate sponsor for the event.



From The Desk of
The Executive Director

We are well into a new calendar year and that means legislative activity in Nashville is heating up. In early February Governor Bredesen delivered his “State of the State” address and the next day the Fiscal Year 2006 State Budget was released.

The proposed budget will receive close scrutiny over the next four months by committees of the General Assembly and Commission staff will be invited to share information about the work of the agency. Our message will be positive and I am taking this column to share that message with you.

With the strong support of the General Assembly and Governor Bredesen, the Commission has extended its reach through 17 different grant categories. By the end of this fiscal year, we will have funded over 850 grants, an increase of 125 over the previous year.

Besides our ongoing grant programs the Commission has reached out in new directions this year. In a few weeks a final report of the Arts Education Needs Assessment project will be delivered to the Commission. This report will reflect the Commission’s influence on arts education in Tennessee and will provide a guide for arts education as the agency undertakes the development of a new strategic plan.

Everyday we are seeing how the arts improve the livability of Tennessee communities, assisting in revitalizing economies when included in the redevelopment of downtowns and neighborhoods. And it is happening in every region of the state.

The Commission continues to fund and enlarge the Funds For At-Risk Youth program. Through innovative projects the arts have demonstrated the positive impact they can have on reaching and challenging youth at risk or those already in trouble. In many cases it has proven to be their last hope for a better life.

The Commission is providing funding through its Cultural Crossroads program for organizations within regions to work together to identify, embrace and promote what makes them unique and then market that uniqueness. Working together, these groups can bring visitors and dollars to their region.

The Tennessee Arts Commission wants to continue serving the people of this state, nurturing an environment where the arts are appreciated, promoting and supporting Tennessee artists and working to preserve the state’s rich cultural heritage for our children and for generations to come.

As I meet with the various committees, I assure them that each dollar the General Assembly allocates to the Commission is a dollar well spent...well managed...and well invested in Tennessee’s creative future.

Rich Boyd
Executive Director

commission news

Commission’s Internship Program Helps
Students Gain Valuable Experience

Established in the Fall of 2000, the Tennessee Arts Commission’s Internship Program continues to provide students valuable and practical experience that compliments their formal education. The program prepares future leaders for arts-related professions – not only in Tennessee, but across the nation.

“We certainly realize that not everyone who studies art becomes a professional artist. Some may go into arts-related professions while others may become arts administrators. This program provides a broad range of experience that benefits the student in whatever career path they take,” says Rich Boyd, executive director of the Commission.

The concept of the program is to benefit both the Commission and the student. The Commission is working toward filling the void in arts-related positions with competent and highly professional individuals. The student gets credit from their school, and gains experience that is often difficult to find.

“We tend to look at the internship program as a partnership between the Commission and participating schools. The program is beneficial to everyone involved,” says Boyd.

The students receive a wide range of experience that may not available to them in the classroom, and provides practical experience in the business of art.



Nicole Pietrantononi (right), director of visual arts, crafts and media for the Tennessee Arts Commission, talks with Anna Gonzalez, an intern from Watkins College of Art and Design. Gonzalez is a junior majoring in fine arts.

“We believe we are providing a real opportunity to our interns. They leave with an understanding of how an arts agency operates,” adds Boyd.

There are two key areas where former interns have gained experience by working with the Visual Arts Program of the Commission. Students have assisted with exhibits in the Commission’s gallery, and have gained an understanding of how a gallery operates and how exhibits are presented. Another important benefit is the opportunity for exposure to the grant process.

“Understanding the entire grant process is crucial to those who become artists, or work in an arts organization. They need to become efficient with the grant process to survive,” says Nicole Pietrantononi, director of the Commission’s Visual Arts Program.

For more information on the Commission’s Internship Program, contact Nicole Pietrantononi at (615) 532-9798, or e-mail: nicole.pietrantononi@state.tn.us.

Schedule Announced For 2005 Advisory Panels

The Tennessee Arts Commission has announced the schedule for its 2005 Citizen Advisory Panels. The meetings, which are open to the public, will be held in the conference room at the Commission’s office, located at 401 Charlotte Avenue in Nashville. Grant applications for Fiscal Year 2006 will be reviewed. The panels meet annually to review grant applications in various arts disciplines.

“Our citizen panels consist of dedicated, informed individuals from across the state who have strong backgrounds in, or are active supporters of the arts. They evaluate grant applications for quality and excellence, and they provide an invaluable service to the Commission,” says Rod Reiner, deputy director of the Commission.

All meetings will begin at 10 a.m. Scheduled meetings will be held:

Community Arts	Tuesday, April 5
Folklife	Tuesday, April 12
Visual Arts, Crafts, and Media	Wednesday, April 13
Dance	Thursday, April 14
Rural Arts	Friday, April 15
Arts Advancement and Expansion	Tuesday, April 19
Inter-Arts	Wednesday, April 20
Arts Education	Friday, April 22
Music	Tuesday, April 26
Theater	Thursday, April 28

For more information on the Advisory Panels contact Rod Reiner at (615) 741-2093, or e-mail: rod.reiner@state.tn.us. Information on the various grant programs offered by the Tennessee Arts Commission is available at: www.arts.state.tn.us.

Noble Joins Commission As Performing Arts Director

The Tennessee Arts Commission has appointed **J. Noble** to serve as the agency’s performing arts director. In making the announcement, Rich Boyd, executive director of the Commission, said Noble’s extensive background in theater, experience in the performing arts, and in presenting, will enable him to make a significant contribution to the Commission’s Performing Arts Program.

Noble will be responsible for the management of grants offered through the Commission in the disciplines of theater, dance, and music, as well as overseeing the expanding Touring Arts Program.

Noble was previously artistic director for Theatre Memphis where his responsibilities included management of all artistic personnel, development and grant writing, and supervision of education and outreach activities. He was also part of the adjunct faculty of Christian Brothers University in Memphis, where he taught basic acting and speech classes.

“We are pleased to have someone with J’s background join our staff in this key position. The program is entering a new and exciting phase, and under his leadership this vital program will continue to serve our current constituents while reaching out to performing artists across the state,” said Boyd.

Boyd says the program is at a point where it can grow and develop into an important resource for Tennessee’s performing artists.

“The timing couldn’t be better. J. is joining the staff at a time when the Performing Arts Program has a great deal of potential to assist the many talented performing artists in our state. We have many ambitious goals, and I believe J. will help us achieve those goals,” Boyd said.

Noble received bachelor’s degrees in economics and finance from Union University in Jackson, and received a master’s degree in English education from Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi. He also has a master’s degree in directing from the University of Memphis.



*J. Noble
Director of
Performing Arts*

For information on the Commission’s Performing Arts Program, contact J.Noble at (615) 532-9801 or e-mail: j.noble@state.tn.us.

Commission Gallery Continues Tradition Of Excellence



Anita Jung, an artist from Knoxville, unpacks her work for an exhibit at the Tennessee Arts Commission Gallery.



The Commission’s gallery is one of the best kept secrets in the downtown Nashville art scene.

For over 25 years, the Tennessee Arts Commission has presented exhibits featuring many of the state’s most talented visual artists. The artists have participated in both solo and group exhibitions that have provided visibility for their work and brought recognition to their creativity. Artists from all areas of the state have been featured in the small gallery located inside the Commission office at 401 Charlotte Avenue in downtown Nashville. Many have attended receptions for the artists, and several of the artists have sold their work as a result of the exposure they receive.

“The gallery provides an opportunity for visual artists to display their work, and an opportunity for the public to view some of the finest art created in Tennessee. The exhibits showcase the diversity and originality of the many extraordinary artists in our state,” says Nicole Pietrantoni, director of visual arts, crafts and media, for the Tennessee Arts Commission.

One of the most successful recent exhibits featured artists Irene Ritter of Nashville and Jeanne Reynolds of Memphis. Ritter, a sculptor, sold eight pieces during the exhibit, and the reception was one of the most well-attended.

“As an artist it was one of the best experiences I’ve had. The staff of the Commission was not only professional, but friendly and warm. It was a wonderful experience, and it opened up a whole new world for me. The Commission really encouraged me and I was so honored to participate in the exhibit,” said Ritter.

Exhibit schedules are planned well in advance. According to Pietrantoni, applications are accepted from artists working in all forms of visual arts and crafts. A panel of professionals from across the state evaluates applications based on quality of work, professional activity, and active involvement in the arts community. The application process is open to professional artists who are current Tennessee residents. The gallery has schedule exhibits through 2005 and the first part of 2006.

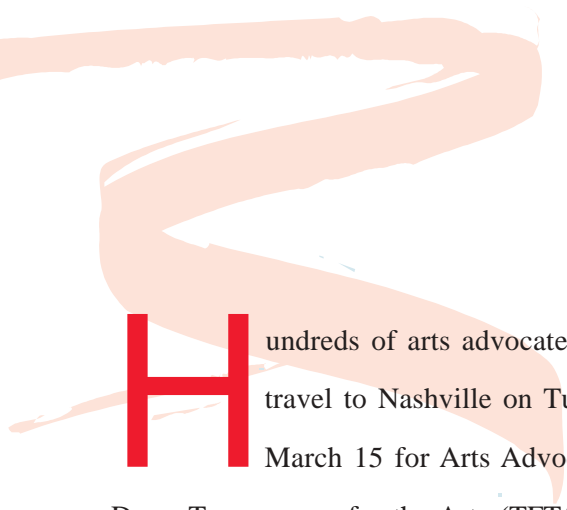
The Commission has made renewed efforts recently to increase attendance at gallery receptions.

“We’re trying several different approaches to make our receptions more accessible. We have moved many of our receptions to Saturday, so we can coordinate with other galleries holding receptions. It’s our hope that if people are downtown for one reception, they will attend our reception as well,” says Pietrantoni.

“Another advantage of holding receptions on Saturday is the parking situation downtown. It’s much easier on Saturday,” she says.

Pietrantoni says the Commission has also placed an emphasis on promoting exhibits through the Commission’s Communication, Information and Technology Division.

The exhibits change every six weeks, and admission is free. Regular hours for the gallery are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. For more information on the Tennessee Arts Commission Gallery, contact Nicole Pietrantoni at (615) 532-9798 or e-mail: nicole.pietrantoni@sate.tn.us.



Hundreds of arts advocates will travel to Nashville on Tuesday, March 15 for Arts Advocacy Day. Tennesseans for the Arts (TFTA) sponsors the event annually to provide arts organizations and leaders an opportunity to voice their support for the arts and to thank their legislators for supporting the arts. TFTA is a statewide alliance of individuals, organizations, and businesses committed to providing leadership in advocacy efforts to strengthen funding for all the arts and to promote the importance and value of the arts in Tennessee.

arts advocacy

Arts Supporters Bring Passion And Enthusiasm To Arts Advocacy Day

Tennesseans For The Arts Places Focus On Communication And Building Relationships

Plans are coming together for Arts Advocacy Day which will be held in Nashville on Tuesday, March 15. Tennesseans for the Arts (TFTA) has planned an ambitious agenda for the annual event, and arts supporters from all regions of the state are expected to attend at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center. Registration, on the day of the event, will get underway at 10:30 a.m. in the lobby of the Polk Theater. The program and lunch will begin at 11 a.m. inside the theater. Participants will visit with their legislators in the afternoon. Many of those spending the day in Nashville will attend a reception that evening honoring the recipients of the Governor’s Awards in the Arts. The reception will be held at the BellSouth Building at 5:30 p.m.

“Arts advocacy continues to grow in Tennessee. Last year we had over 200 attending, and we expect a good turnout this year as well,” says Tom Turk, executive director of Tennesseans for the Arts.

“People meet and communicate with their legislators throughout the year on an individual basis. Arts Advocacy Day provides an opportunity for large numbers of arts supporters to stand up and be heard collectively. Everyone meeting at the same time certainly creates a greater impact. It’s a day when the arts are the central focus in Legislative Plaza,” adds Turk.

Martha Ellen Maxwell, president of TFTA, says that exciting plans are already in place to make this one of the most successful advocacy days ever held.

“We are expecting an increase in attendance for several reasons. One of the reasons is increased interest generated from a series of receptions held for Legislators across the state in August and September of last year. The receptions raised awareness of the importance of this kind of personal contact from arts leaders with legislators from their home districts,” says Maxwell.

“Arts Advocacy Day provides an opportunity for large numbers of arts supporters to stand up and be heard collectively. Everyone meeting at the same time certainly creates a greater impact. It's a day when the arts are the central focus in Legislative Plaza.”

*Tom Turk, Executive Director
Tennesseans for the Arts*

Maxwell credits another reason for optimistic projections. Arts Advocacy Day will be held on the same day as the Governor’s Awards in the Arts. “I think many people who are traveling to Nashville will attend both events,” she says.

Planning has been underway for Arts Advocacy Day for some time. According to Whitney Jo, chair of the event and managing director of Playhouse on the Square in Memphis, the entire process has been a team effort with few problems. She expects attendance to be higher this year because of increased marketing efforts and renewed attempts to get the word out to new participants.

“Last year’s event was a huge success. There were more people than ever before. Our goal this year is to continue that growth, bringing even more people from across the state to learn about advocacy and to meet with legislators. The more people who are aware of the importance of advocating for the arts, and the more people who talk to their legislators about the importance of the arts to our state, the better for every citizen,” says Jo.

Jo says more and more arts groups are realizing the importance of Arts Advocacy Day. “Arts advocacy has been placed on the front burner, and this event is the perfect opportunity for participants to become even more motivated and educated about the process of advocating. It’s a time for all arts supporters to come to Nashville and let their voices be heard,” adds Jo.

Education And Motivation Push The Arts To The Forefront

Educating participants is always a major factor in Arts Advocacy Day. Information sheets are distributed on the day of the event, and guest speakers talk about the process of advocacy during the program. And throughout the year TFTA sends out a monthly newsletter that focuses on advocacy topics. TFTA views advocacy as an ongoing process.

“We realize that not everyone feels comfortable making an appointment to meet their legislators, much less going to talk to them. Our goal is to explain the process, and help everyone with speaking points. We want to take away the intimidation factor that sometimes comes with meeting a government official. We want everyone to feel at ease,” says Jo.

The main message that TFTA wants everyone to express to their legislators is a simple “thank you.” It is important participants recognize their legislator’s support of the arts.

“It is important for people to show how their lives are affected by the arts and the importance of the arts to their particular community,” adds Jo.

Jo says the event both educates and motivates the participants. “I hope that Arts Advocacy Day has the same affect on the participants as it does every year for me. Arts Advocacy Day does two very valuable things for me each year - educates and motivates. It educates me on important issues that the arts will face in government for the upcoming year, and makes me aware of new advocacy methods. It motivates me to become a better advocate for the arts, and provides an opportunity for me to encourage others to do the same. The event motivates me to speak up, speak out, and to be heard,” she says.



Tennesseans for the Arts committee members (seated, left to right) Janet Clough of Nashville; Chair Whitney Jo, Playhouse on the Square, Memphis; and Kathi Landon Leatherwood, Jackson Arts Council, discuss plans for Arts Advocacy Day. Standing (left to right) are Tom Turk, executive director of TFTA; Shannon Dixon, Greater Memphis Arts Council; Ann Davis, McMinn County Living Heritage Museum; and President Martha Ellen Maxwell of Memphis.

The Importance of Advocating For The Arts

Arts advocacy is really about building relationships, establishing contacts, and building friendships with legislators. These relationships are very important when arts funding and arts issues are at the center of discussion in the legislature.



Martha Ellen Maxwell, president of TFTA, (left) discusses plans for Arts Advocacy Day with TFTA Executive Director Tom Turk.

“We want to help our elected officials see the many ways the arts contribute to Tennessee’s bottom line. The arts should be viewed as a tool for economic development and tourism. We are also employers and taxpayers. We reach out to troubled children, offer a voice to those without one, and provide citizens with access to an enormous range and variety of quality performing and visual arts opportunities,” says Molly Pratt, a consultant for government and community relations for TFTA.

Arts advocacy is about educating legislators and the public in advance, and opening the lines of communication to those that hold the power. And it’s about proving the significance of the arts in our communities.

“I think when we have a large turnout of arts supporters for Arts Advocacy Day, it shows the passion and commitment of a large number of constituents. When legislators see these constituents from their own districts, it makes an impression. For years, I’m afraid that arts supporters have been too quiet, and nearly invisible to our elected officials. When we get together as one group and speak with a united voice, it is truly impressive and does make a difference,” says Maxwell.

For more information on Arts Advocacy Day, or Tennesseans for the Arts, contact Tom Turk at (615) 353-5056 or e-mail: TFTA2@comcast.net. Information is also available on TFTA’s Web site: www.TFTArts.com.

The Tennessee Arts Commission established the Governor's Awards in the Arts in 1971 to recognize individuals and organizations that make outstanding contributions to the arts in Tennessee. The awards are Tennessee's highest honor in the arts. The contribution may be as an artist or patron, as an arts or private-sector organization, in arts education or community involvement or for a unique achievement. The awards recognize and reward extraordinary arts contributions and achievements in whatever form they may take. More than 165 individuals and organizations have received these awards since 1971.

governor's awards in the arts

The recipients of the 2005 Governor's Awards in the Arts represent the best of Tennessee. This group of outstanding Tennesseans has enriched the human spirit through their creativity, leadership, and commitment to excellence. In many cases, their influence has extended well beyond our state, reaching others across the nation and internationally. The awards provide the Tennessee Arts Commission an opportunity to recognize these talented individuals who have inspired us, and given so much to enrich our cultural heritage.

FOLKLIFE HERITAGE AWARD

The Folklife Heritage Award recognizes folk artists or organizations who have made outstanding contributions to artistic tradition. The award is intended to honor long-term achievements within art forms that are rooted in the traditional culture of Tennessee.

Charlie Acuff
Alcoa

For 70 years **Charlie Acuff** has been playing fiddles hand-made by his father, delighting audiences with tunes passed down to him by his grandfather. A great and humorous storyteller, Acuff interweaves his tales with musical magic, transforming our understanding and appreciation of the people and culture that formed the foundation of today's Tennessee. Originally from Union County, he comes from a long and distinguished musical family tradition and often played with his famous cousin, Roy. As an old-time fiddle player, Charlie Acuff has preserved the musical heritage of Tennessee, teaching young musicians and historians, and contributing to the tourism industry of East Tennessee. Generous beyond fault, he says he does it for the love of the music and the stories.



Photo: Dr. Robert Cogswell



Fletcher Bright
Lookout Mountain

An accomplished teacher, arranger and musician, **Fletcher Bright** has touched the lives of Tennesseans through his musical genius and his generosity. Founder and leader of the bluegrass group, "Dismembered Tennesseans," Bright has achieved international fame as a fiddle player, making bluegrass music approachable, lively and enormously entertaining while keeping a close grasp of its traditions and style. Through his commitment to the arts, both financially and as an artist, he has made it possible for Chattanoogaans and Tennesseans of all ages to experience traditional music.

ARTS LEADERSHIP AWARD

The Arts Leadership Award recognizes organizations, businesses, educators, patrons, arts administrators, corporations and volunteers who have demonstrated significant support or participation in activities which foster excellence in, appreciation of, or access to the arts throughout the State of Tennessee.

Judy Woodruff
Johnson City

For 17 years **Judy Woodruff** has served as the executive director of the Tennessee Association of Dance. Under her direction, dancers, choreographers and dance educators in Tennessee have found support and myriad opportunities to work and to grow. Woodruff has made the annual fall statewide conference an atmosphere for educating young dancers in dance as a serious art form. She has initiated teachers and arts administration seminars and created summer dance camps for Tennessee's young dancers. She is an adjunct professor at East Tennessee State University and for twenty years has directed the Mountain Movers Dance Company, which she founded. A highly sought after guest artist for dance companies, Judy Woodruff leads seminars and workshops across the country, bringing respect and recognition to the cultural life of Tennessee.





Richard R. Ranta
Memphis

Richard R. Ranta has played a significant role in creating the conditions and climate for the arts to grow and flourish in the local Memphis community and throughout the State of Tennessee. Dr. Ranta founded and has served as the dean of the College of Communication and Fine Arts at The University of Memphis since 1978. A former member of the Tennessee Arts Commission, he also served as chair of the Tennessee Film, Entertainment and Music Commission. He has held leadership positions with the Southern Arts Federation, Southern States Communication Association and currently serves on the board of the National Academy of Recording Sciences, responsible for the prestigious Grammy awards in music. From the start of his career he has reached out into the community to become a key player in the arts. He has served in a leadership capacity on nearly every major museum and arts organization board in Memphis. While his greatest impact may be in music, his influence extends to visual arts, theater, dance and folk arts as well.

DISTINGUISHED ARTIST AWARD

Recognizes Tennessee artists of exceptional talent and creativity in any discipline, who over the course of a career, have contributed to the arts and have helped guide and influence directions, trends and aesthetic practices on a state or national level.

Hubert Shuptrine
Chattanooga

Hubert Shuptrine is a nationally acclaimed visual artist who is well-known for his work in watercolor and his ability to make every picture an event to be reckoned with. He is able to enter into objects and people and places with the sense of these things entering into him. He began as an abstract oil painter in the 1960's, earning various awards as well as the praise of his mentors. In 1970 he taught himself the basics of watercolor painting and his world was never the same. He is a native son of Tennessee and a graduate of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. The artist collaborated with the late author James Dickey in a 1974 book titled *Jericho: The South Beheld*. He is a true Southerner whose stories are told with poetic images. The people in his paintings are familiar to all of us, from the Native Americans to the mountain people of Southeast Tennessee.



Booker T. & The MG's
Memphis

Booker T. and the MG's have produced an impressive body of work that has helped change popular culture and the world forever. Known as the architects of soul music, no other instrumental group in history has been as prolific and has influenced so many as this group of musicians who began their career while in high school in Memphis recording at Stax Records. After their formation in 1962, they recorded 13 albums of their own, as well as writing songs for almost all of the other soul music superstars on the label's roster. All of the original members, except Al Jackson, who died in 1975, remain active in the music industry today. They have been the recipient of Grammy Awards, Rhythm and Blues Association Pioneer Awards and in 1992 the band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.



Isaac Hayes
Cordova

Isaac Hayes is an internationally known Tennessean whose creative achievements span over four decades. He is a musician, a television and film actor, a radio personality, and a humanitarian and educator who has won numerous awards and was inducted on the first ballot into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. He played a leading role in creating what has become known as the "Memphis Sound" and in the process wrote Grammy-winning songs including the ever-popular *Soul Man*. His soundtrack for the movie *Shaft* received a Golden Globe, Oscar and Grammy. Through the Isaac Hayes Foundation he has raised funds for the Stax Music Academy in Memphis and promoted literacy throughout the world, especially in the United States and Ghana in West Africa. Hayes remains active as a performer, recording artist and radio host. He is a successful businessperson and a dedicated citizen in the Memphis community. He currently serves as a spokesperson for the tourism industry in Tennessee.

Artist Curtiss Brock Selected To Create Award

Curtiss Brock, an internationally exhibited glass artist, was commissioned to design the awards that will be presented on March 15 at the Governor's Awards in the Arts.

Brock oversees the glass program at Appalachian Center for Crafts in Smithville, Tennessee. He has also worked at the Pilchuck Glass School and has been the recipient of a Tennessee Arts Commission and Southern Arts Federation Individual Artist Fellowships. Brock's work is included in numerous collections around the world including the American Craft Museum, Tennessee State Museum, and the Memphis Brooks Museum.

"My main goal was to produce more than an award, but a work of art that was beautiful and that people would want to represent all of their hard work," Brock said.

Brock's creation for this year's award is a slender, flame-shaped piece of glass with streams of warm colors and bubbled textures within the form. Each award is a dramatic and elegant one-of-a-kind work of art that embodies the esteem of the Governor's Awards in the Arts.

"Building from the center out is a process we use in glass, continually adding layers upon layers of glass," Brock said of his work. "People didn't arrive as great contributors to the arts—they emerged—and that growth, the day upon day, layer upon layer process eventually arrives at something bigger and important."





arts across the state

Opera Memphis At Home In New Facility

Contemporary Building Recognized With Merit Award In Architecture

With the opening of the Clark Opera Memphis Center, Opera Memphis not only moves into a new and modern facility, but moves the opera into a new era. The new facility allows Opera Memphis to combine its rehearsal, box office, administrative, and production facilities into one building. This is the first time in its history that everything has been combined under one roof. Completion of the new headquarters has allowed the organization to gain higher visibility and increased its professional status among other arts organizations in the state. In fact, the new \$3.5 million contemporary building received recognition from the Tennessee branch of the American Institute of Architects in 2003 when it received a Merit Award in Architecture.

“This building has not only changed the architecture of Memphis, but it has also changed the architecture of the opera. It places us on a whole new level. By having our own facility, it makes us more visible and viable as an arts organization in the community,” says Steve Aiken, general director of Opera Memphis.

Michael Ching, in his eleventh season as artistic director for the opera, says the new facility has broadened the program and set the stage for long-term growth.



“The Clark Opera Memphis Center has given us the opportunity to go from six nights of activity to nearly thirty. We have opera, but we now also have jazz and classical chamber music. The building let’s people know that Memphis has an opera company that is very much alive, very contemporary, and very much a part of the fabric of life in our city,” says Ching.

“Artists from across the country come in and are wowed. We already had a reputation as a friendly place to work and singers have always enjoyed singing at the Orpheum. Now they also know that we have superior working conditions,” he adds.

Opera Memphis will continue holding its larger performances at the Orpheum Theatre. They have performed at the historic theater since the 80s. That facility offers excellent acoustics and seats approximately 2300. Smaller performances will be held at the new facility which seats around 400. The Clark Opera Memphis Center, which basically serves as the headquarters for Opera Memphis, also has a large rehearsal space to accommodate the performers.

“Many visitors, from Memphis and other cities, have said it’s one of the nicest facilities they have seen,” says Ching.

A New Beginning For Opera Memphis

It’s a far cry from the days when the Opera Memphis facilities were located in an old hospital building, built for recuperating World War II GIs. In those days there were frequent power surges and outages, the costume shop was not air-conditioned, and there were holes in the prop floor with pigeons roosting throughout the building. Rehearsals were held at various high schools throughout the city.

According to Ching, the seeds were planted for the new headquarters back in the early 90s. After the departure of an artistic director who was splitting his time between Memphis and Indianapolis, the Opera Memphis board of trust decided it needed a full-time artistic director who lived in the community. Ching was hired for the position. According to Ching, the position offered him a great opportunity and appealed to him on many levels. However, the facilities left a lot to be desired when he arrived.

“Soon after my arrival, I discovered a fortunate coincidence. Two of Opera Memphis’ supporters, Virginia and Henry Clark, were supporters of the Florida Grand Opera, where I had my first job. From this connection, a great friendship developed. Around 1995, Virginia Clark walked in to purchase tickets and said she wanted to help get us a new office,” says Ching.

From that point, the plan took shape. The opera had a supporter who happened to be an architect. He drew up a plan with the help of then-executive director, Karen Tiler. The location was debated for three years. Finally, the discussion narrowed down to two locations, one next to the Orpheum Theatre and the other in an expensive neighborhood near Memphis’ main suburb. The board settled on the suburban location since it was located near the opera’s main subscriber base.

During this time, the architect, Francis Mah, passed away. In order to select a new architect, a competition was conducted among the main firms in the city, and Hnedak Bobo Group submitted the winning design.

The Clark family pledged a million dollars toward the building. Another equally important supporter, Barbara Hoffmann Marshall, pledged over \$600,000 and commissioned a sculpture for the lobby. The board, endowment board, and honorary board came up with an additional three million, and two board members, R. Marsh Gibson and Joe Jenkins, took on the role of aggressive fundraisers.

Moving Forward With Renewed Optimism

Today, the opera has a reputation for high quality productions and fiscal solvency. According to Ching, there are still challenges ahead, but Opera Memphis has already entered a new era.

“Of course we still have challenges before us, but we are in a better position to face those challenges. Our audience, while not terribly old compared to some companies, is getting older. People don’t subscribe like they used to. And it’s hard to say what cuts in school music education programs will do to music literacy over time. Nevertheless, our facility is providing us with an efficient base from which to operate, innovate, and collaborate. I am confident that we will have great opera in Memphis for many generations,” says Ching.

The Clark Opera Memphis Center is located at 6745 Wolf River Parkway in Memphis. The phone number is (901) 257-3100. Information on Opera Memphis is available online: www.operamemphis.org.

Knoxville Symphony Orchestra Returns To Tennessee Theatre

After a year and a half of massive reconstruction and renovations, the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra (KSO) returned to the Tennessee Theatre for a long awaited homecoming on January 27 and 28. World-renowned mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade joined the KSO for the event, performing several works including a world premier written by Maestro Lucas Richman. Both evenings attracted good crowds, with the Friday night performance a sell-out. Complimentary champagne was provided for ticket buyers in the lobby of the theater, and a post-concert reception was held with concert goers paying \$75 to attend.

The performances opened with KSO Concertmaster Mark Zelmanovich alone on stage performing J.S. Bach’s “Adagio” from Violin Sonata No. 1. The KSO then walked on stage one by one playing Corigliano’s *Promenade* Overture. They continued with Britten’s *Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*, which showcased each instrument’s sound, highlighting the acoustical improvements made to the theater.

“It’s so nice to be back home at the Tennessee Theatre. The theater is absolutely stunning, and the people were astounded by the appearance and how incredible the orchestra sounded,” said Jonathan Winkle, executive director of the KSO.



Photo: Eric Smith / KSO



Photo: Eric Smith / KSO

Maestro Lucas Richman and the Knoxville Symphony stand as the audience welcomes the orchestra back to the newly-renovated Tennessee Theatre.

Winkle says the renovation has been a tremendous success not only for the community, but for the orchestra.

“The acoustics of the renovated hall are better than anything the orchestra has had access to in the past. It’s like we have stepped up the quality of the orchestra overnight. The musicians can hear themselves. It’s fabulous. I was even able to pick out the second woodwinds during the performance,” says Winkle.

The KSO does all of their Masterworks Concerts at the theater. Masterworks includes 15 concerts and is the KSO’s key series. The orchestra is looking at starting a family series in 2006 and 2007, and may move their pop series to the Tennessee Theatre as well.

One of the last surviving great movie theaters from the 1920s, the theater has received a complete overhaul. Fundraising began in 1999, with private contributions paying for more than half of the project. Knox County gave \$6 million with the City of Knoxville providing \$4 million. The U.S. Department of Interior gave more than \$1 million in historic preservation grants, and the state provided \$750,000.

According to Becky Hancock, general manager of the theater, most of the money for the restoration was raised quickly because of the historic significance of the building, and because residents had such great memories of the theater from their youth. Many who grew up around the theater gave small gifts.

Construction began in June of 2003. The KSO performed at the Knoxville Civic Auditorium while renovations were underway.



arts across the state

GUEST COLUMN

National Recognition Encourages Ballet Memphis

Four years ago, Ballet Memphis was awarded a \$1 million challenge grant by the nation’s largest charitable foundation, the Ford Foundation. Citing Ballet Memphis and its ability to reflect its culture, its high production standards and excellent quality, and its ability to maintain fiscal responsibility, Ford Foundation called Ballet Memphis a “national treasure” and an “exemplary institution.” Ford had quietly studied hundreds of arts institutions in twelve disciplines across America, and chose 28 to honor with its New Directions: New Donors Program.

The hope was to jump start awareness and civic pride across the nation after studying giving trends within the context of the huge explosion of individual wealth in our country in the late 90s. The arts had been badly portrayed by National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) bashing, and Ford, long a booster of cultural institutions across the country, wanted to call attention to the importance of creating art for the well-being of our nation’s citizens. Increased wealth was going to churches, hospitals and universities, not to local arts institutions.

Ballet Memphis was one of two ballet companies in the U.S. chosen. The other was San Francisco Ballet. Alvin Ailey and Chicago’s Hubbard Street Dance Theatre were the two modern dance companies chosen. Ballet Memphis was the only Tennessee institution honored in this way, and only three institutions from the southern states were selected.

We were encouraged to put 66 percent of our matched monies (\$3 million) in an endowment and 33 percent in operating funds because our talent needed support, and our capacity for producing significant work was worthy of support. Ford’s hope was that new donors, after giving to this drive, would continue to give because they would see how excellent we are. In effect, Ford felt we were worthy of much more support in our community than we were getting.

One of the positive results of this donation was the encouragement it gave me as an artistic director to explore the creation of meaningful work. We have created work by nationally renowned choreographers to regional stories and regional music. We have danced to the music of B. B. King, Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, John Lee Hooker, Al Green, Big Star, Edgar Myer, Rufus Thomas, The Staple Singers, R. L. Burnside, former Mississippian and current Nashville, Tennessean Kate Campbell and the Stax Music Academy Choir. We have been able to take our unique blend of new dance to southern music to New York, Texas, California and Montreal. With our foundation in classical technique, we have expanded our vocabulary in an effort to understand, embrace and reflect our demographic.

We have incubated emerging choreographers. We have produced heart wrenching work and humorous work that reflects deep issues in our human psyches. It has been profoundly rewarding.

But the economy changed, and expenses skyrocketed. And the nation’s tastes continued to be splintered. The choices for spending an entertainment dollar have burgeoned, and tastes have changed. We continue to have to be creative in shaping who we are.

Our commitment to our community has led us to the creation of a new civic, ethnically-focused company called Dance Fusion. With the support of a small but highly important grant from the Tennessee Arts Commission, we will be able to take our first steps with this company that will be housed at the University of Memphis. The program calls for classes to be taught in ballet technique, African-American urban dance forms, and Latin dance forms. If increased funding can be procured, a civic company comprised of dancers from junior high through college called Dance Fusion will emerge. Prominent guest teachers and choreographers can come and set works upon Dance Fusion, upon Ballet Memphis, and can involve performances that include the professional dancers of Ballet Memphis, the Junior Company of Ballet Memphis and Dance Fusion.

New movement vocabularies can be created as the disciplines are embraced, explored and compared. And from this, community and cultural understanding and appreciation will evolve. New audiences for concert dance can be created.

The Ford campaign is over. The economy took a nosedive which had all the Ford recipients, including Ballet Memphis, see much of their optimism dampened. The events of 9/11, the war in Iraq, an escalating national debt and the difficulties with local and state finances have all taken their tolls on planned growth and dreams.

But becoming recognized nationally for believing in our community and having our aspirations and vision singled out in the company of some of the nation’s most amazing institutions continues to underpin our hopes and our understanding of who we are and what we must do.



Guest Columnist
Dorothy Gunther Pugh
Artistic Director
Ballet Memphis

Our democracy is in need of multi-cultural communication. By cross-connecting, our cultural forms fuse, and new, exciting art forms emerge that expand our experiences as individuals and as people in our community. Engaging and supporting our population in those things that encourage exploration of the ways we enliven, educate and embrace our humanity should be at the center of policy making – national, state, and local. From the time a child is born, we should significantly invest in developing what makes a whole human being. Ongoing, trusting relationships among people who share diverse cultural

expressions are as important – if not more so – than the works that are created.

If we are to be a community and a nation that makes room for all to go forward, we must support and follow the path that great artists can so clearly shape, define and open for us to walk upon. We must be fearless, and we must be risk takers. We must remember that every person is of value in our community and in our nation. And we must participate in artistic creation that reflects this value, reflecting the ideals of democracy.

Artist Maya Lin Dedicates Chapel At Haley Farm In East Tennessee

CLINTON, Tenn. - - The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) recently dedicated a nondenominational chapel on its property in Clinton, Tennessee. The Riggio-Lynch Chapel symbolizes the mission of the CDF's Haley Farm Freedom School and youth leadership programs. It was created by **Maya Lin**, the internationally known artist and architectural designer who is best known for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama. With the completion of the chapel, the Haley Farm becomes the only place in the country with two buildings designed by Lin. She completed the Langston Hughes Library on the same property in 2000.

"It was great to return to Tennessee. In many ways the terrain reminds me very much of my childhood home in Southeastern Ohio. The opportunity to create two structures – one a restoration and the chapel, which was completely new construction, allowed me to explore the idea of time as it relates to architecture. I was interested in the idea of the contrast and compliment between the old and new," says Lin.



Photo: Tim Hursley

The Riggio-Lynch Chapel



Photo: Tim Hursley

Internationally known artist and architectural designer Maya Lin speaks during the dedication ceremony at Haley Farm in Clinton, Tennessee.

The chapel, with its striking ark-shaped design, comprises three structures situated adjacent to an apple orchard and a pond on the 157-acre East Tennessee property. Reminiscent of a wide-berthed ship sailing on a grassy pasture, it is a graceful architectural composition of gently curving and straight lines that is in keeping with the vernacular architectural landscape of Haley Farm.

Lin commented, "The chapel's ark-inspired design supports the mission of the CDF and its Freedom Schools to carry the nation's family of children to safe harbor. Architecturally, my goal was to quietly raise people's hope and to elevate their spirits through beautiful surroundings, and in turn, to demonstrate that they are valued. To be able to design a meeting place where people of all denominations and beliefs can come together was wonderful for me. I could not be more proud."

The CDF purchased the Haley Farm in 1994 from the estate of Pulitzer Prize-winning author **Alex Haley** as a center for spiritual renewal and intergenerational leadership development. More than 6,000 young leaders have been trained at Haley Farm, including over 3,600 college and 1,650 high school students who have operated summer reading-based literacy programs for children. The CDF operates 61 Freedom Schools in 18 states.

For more information on the programs of the CDF, visit their Web site: www.childrensdefense.org. The Haley Farm Freedom School is not open to the general public, except for special events. For more information call (865) 457-6466.

Van Valkenburg To Lead Statewide Art Education Organization

CHATTANOOGA - - **Rodney Van Valkenburg**, director of arts education for Allied Arts of Greater Chattanooga, has been asked by the Tennessee Arts Commission to lead a statewide arts education organization.

Following a statewide arts education needs assessment, the Tennessee Arts Commission is working to re-establish the Tennessee Alliance for Arts Education. This nonprofit group is part of the John F. Kennedy Center for Arts Education Network which includes 46 state Alliance organizations. State Alliance organizations bring together educators, community leaders, arts organizations, and concerned citizens to plan and implement programs and activities while achieving the national network's goals of advocacy, unity, governance and service.

Van Valkenburg has been named executive secretary of the Tennessee Alliance. "Under Rodney's direction, Chattanooga has become a model site for arts education programming," said Kim Leavitt, director of arts education for the Commission. "He has experience working with teaching artists, schools, and statewide organizations as well as nationally recognized leaders in the field of arts education. He's the ideal person to manage this statewide network."

Van Valkenburg was also recognized as "a friend of art education" recently by the Tennessee Arts Education Association during their annual convention.



Rodney Van Valkenburg leads a strategic planning session for Allied Arts School Program.



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